Tintern Abbey of Wordsworth is usually regarded as a poem of mystical vision. Discuss.

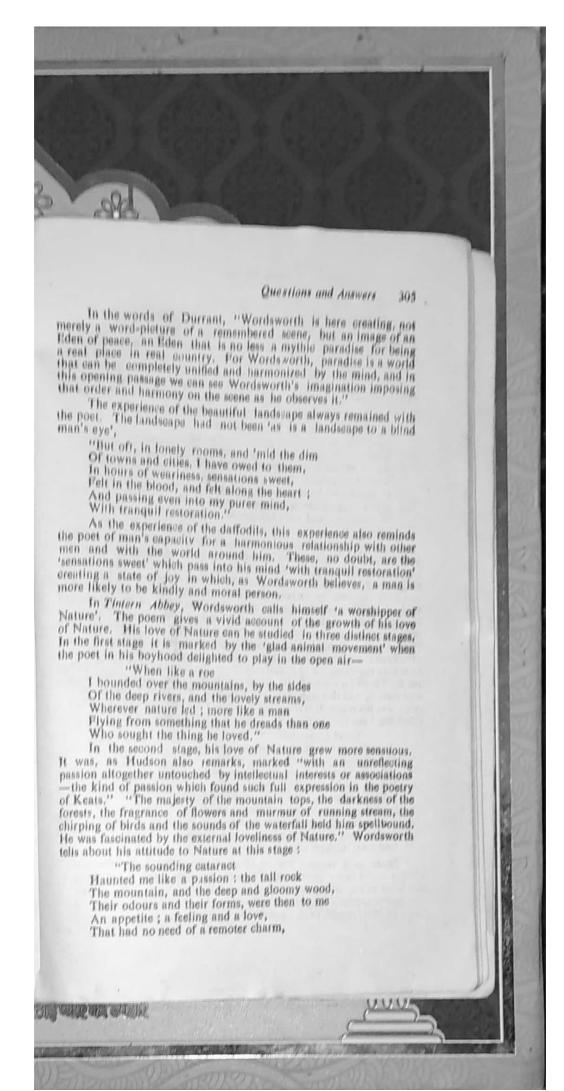
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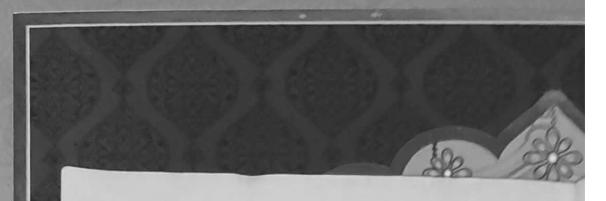
Trace the different stages of Wordsworth's love of Nature as reflected in Tintern Abbey.

Ans. Tintern Abbey of Wordsworth has been called by Myres as "the consecrated formulary of Wordsworthian faith". This poem records the poetls attitude towards Nature. Unlike most of Wordsworth's poems, it presents no story, but an account of the poet's own thoughts and feelings. Though the lines are in the eighteenth-century manner, both in subject-matter and verse-form, there remains an important difference between the nature poetry of Thomson or Cowper and Wordsworth's achievement. Wordsworth undoubtedly possessed greater intellectual powers.

Tintern Abbey is undoubtedly the poet's autobiography in miniature unfolding his spiritual evolution and different stages of development in his attitude towards Nature—a change in his attitude from boyhood to manhood. It was written when Wordsworth was slowly recovering from a 'grave spiritual crisis'. He tells us how he had visited the scene, i.e., the valley of the river Wye five years earlier. The poem begins with an evocation of the past:

"Five years have past; five summers, with the length Of five long winters! and again I hear These waters, rolling from their mountain springs With a soft inland murmur."





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By thought supplied, nor any interest Unborrowed from the eye,"

But gradually Nature assumed sober and mystical dimensions for the poet. It no more remained 'an attractive arrangement of form and colour and sound, alluring the sense'. This stage is marked with a communion with Nature. It is the stage when the poet sees Nature through the eye of soul, and not through the physical eye. At this stage Wordsworth passes through spiritual experiences of Nature. The youthful jollity turns into a 'blessed mood';

"that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things."

In fact, the third stage of Wordsworth's conception of Nature was the result of the poet's mood of despair and gloom caused by his interest in politics which gave him a shock at the sight of the suffering humanity. According to Walter Raleigh, when the crisis was past, the love of Nature returned to him, but shorn of its old despotism; it was subdued to a dominant scheme of thought, and became fellow-inmate in his mind with the love of man, and with 'a deep sense of pathos of things'. At this stage the poet's love of Nature was no longer as passionate as it was earlier. Mixed with an attachment to humanity, it grew calmer and sober. Now he began to realise the existence of a unifying spirit running through all things. In fact, it was a state of the poet's pantheistic creed, and as Warwick also puts it, "At this stage the foundation of Wordsworth's entire existence was his mode of seeing God in Nature and Nature in God." The following lines give expression to this faith of Wordsworth:

"And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling in the light of setting suns,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man
And the round ocean, and the giving air,
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought
And rolls through all things".

These lines suggest the mystical vision of the poet. He now sees the world in its relationship to human needs. He has attained to a sense of the ultimate unity of the universe, and of the one life that interpenetrates all things and all beings. About the mystical vision of Wordsworth in this poem, Durrant observes: